

WEST POINT LIFE.

FOUR YEARS OF RIGID DISCIPLINE FOR CADETS.

The Pleb's Year of Servitude and Submission to Hazing-Programme of Daily Life and Study.

NO place exists in the United States the name of which is so closely interwoven with the history of the country as that of West Point. It was a conspicuous place in the days of the Revolutionary struggle, when its topographical situation made it desirable, and near and about it were enacted some of the deeds of heroism which will live to the credit of the patriotic Continentals while the mounds of the Republic shall last. Its situation on the Hudson, says the New York Tribune, is one of the beautiful spots of the country, and, with great changes have been made near it since the days of the Revolution and the relentless hand of nineteenth century progress has transformed many districts near it into modern, prosaic towns. West Point remains undisturbed and majestic as it left the hand of the great Architect, and even the modern buildings which have been erected on the heights which overlook the river and the proud monument which recalls the names of departed heroes pale into insignificance before the picture of natural beauty which nothing can obliterate while the Hudson winds beneath the rocky cliffs and verdure and sunlight add their colors to the scene.

But to the American West Point is attractive beyond its association with the days of old and its natural beauty, because from the academy which the Government maintains upon the reservation came the men who wrote their names in imperishable letters upon the country's history and repaid in many instances with their life's blood the benefits which they received there. The cadets come from all parts of the country; they represent all grades and classes of the community, and there is probably no educational institution on the continent in which a man's social, political or financial standing would count for less than in West Point, and where his advancement and final graduation would depend so thoroughly and exclusively upon his own personal work. Cadets are appointed by members of Congress and by the President; and in recent years it has been the custom to give the places of principal and alternate to the aspirants by competitive examination. A candidate must be over seventeen years old and under twenty-two. If he is under five feet in height he is ineligible. He must be perfectly formed and must be of a "good moral" character. He must be able to read and write the English language correctly and to perform, with facility and accuracy, the various operations of the ground rules of arithmetic, of reduction, of simple and compound proportion and vulgar and decimal fractions, and have a knowledge of English grammar, of descriptive geography, particularly of the United States and of the country's history. The regulations provide: "No married person shall be admitted as a candidate; and if any candidate shall be married before graduation such marriage shall be considered as equivalent to a resignation, and he shall leave the institution accordingly." After a boy has passed the prescribed examination and has been found qualified mentally, physically and morally to become a cadet, he must report on or before June 15 following the examination to the Superintendent of the academy and sign an agreement for service in the following form:

I, _____, of the State of _____, aged _____ years, _____ months, do hereby declare, with the consent of my parents or guardian, that from the date of my admission as a cadet of the United States Military Academy I will serve in the Army of the United States or eight years, unless sooner discharged by competent authority.

The cadet also subscribes to an oath to support the Constitution of the United States, and that he will bear true allegiance to the National Government.

The number of men in West Point is comparatively small, about 300 in all, and the new student becomes conspicuous at once by the manner of his carriage and his lack of military bearing. This is just as true of those who



THE MESS HALL.

had some experience in so-called military schools before they came to West Point as of the boys who come fresh from their mother's apron strings. The "setting-up" is done by upper class men, whose apparent severity has caused many a young heart to beat rapidly and whose shout of "What do you mean by standing that way?" or "You, I mean, you there," or "Don't you know what your right foot is?" has caused a lump to rise in the throat of many a new cadet who until that moment fancied that he was letter perfect and with points to spare. The new man comes to the academy at that time of the year when the hard work for those who remain is over, and camp life begins. Hard and exacting work has been the order of the day; unceasing, tireless application to the studies which extend over a wide field has taken the time of the whole year, and the student hails the advent of June with joy, because it brings the

camp season and comparative rest. It is particularly welcome to the men who are just completing their first year, who will emerge from their pleb-



THE BATTLE MONUMENT.

dom into full-fledged citizenship, who will throw off the galling yoke of underling, and will have a new lot of plebs with whom to get even for what they themselves have endured. And so, with every yearling standing in wait for him, the cadet enters camp for a season of about eleven weeks. If his heart is not broken by the upper class men while in camp, and if he passes the examination which follows a few months later, he becomes a full-fledged cadet, with a prospect of being graduated from the school in four years. The camp trial is the



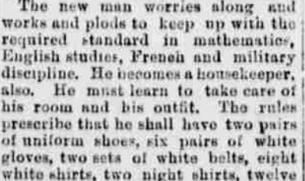
ACADEMIC BUILDING AT WEST POINT.

most severe test, and the man who goes through the ordeal of the peculiar hazing to which the pleb is subjected, who can control himself sufficiently to take it all in the proper spirit, who can keep up with his studies in the mean time and acquire sufficient rudimentary knowledge of military matters to satisfy his instructors, shows himself well qualified for the work which will follow and for the positions of trust and responsibility to which he may be called later.

It does not matter who the man is, whether he is the son of a Senator, a General, a diplomat, or a blacksmith, whether rich or poor, he is a pleb with the plebs, and no power can save him from making love to a broomstick in the presence of a lot of upper class men if they decide that he shall do so, no influence can gain for him the privilege of sitting in the presence of an upper class man unless that man asks him to do so, and his ancestry, station or future prospects would avail him little if he failed to "air" the upper class man properly and respectfully.

The pleb is rigidly excluded from all the social functions, the little entertainments and jollifications. He has no part in the joys and sorrows of the older men, he can make no visits, although he frequently receives such and at hours when they are the least expected. He is treated by men who were possibly his friends a short time before he came to the Academy in a manner which is worse than indifference, and many a poor fellow, thinking it all over, and realizing that for two years he must remain on the reservation, with no hope for one day's vacation, has clenched his fists in anger and consented to remain only because the hardship of it all was better than the brand of cowardice with which he would be marked if he left. When the men least expect it, a number of upper class men may come into his tent and sit down where they can find a place. He must stand, and then may come an order to tell a story about his travels in India or Iceland or New Jersey, to go through the manual of arms with a lead pencil, to stand on one foot while he names the principal rivers in South America or the capitals of the Territories in the United States. Then there are certain calisthenic exercises for which the upper class men have a great liking when they are performed by a pleb, and men have been kept busy performing these exercises by their tyrannizers until they were exhausted.

The new man worries along and works and plods to keep up with the required standard in mathematics, English studies, French and military discipline. He becomes a housekeeper, also. He must learn to take care of his room and his outfit. The rules prescribe that he shall have two pairs of uniform shoes, six pairs of white gloves, two sets of white belts, eight white shirts, two night shirts, twelve collars, eight pairs socks, eight pairs summer drawers, eight pairs for winter, six handkerchiefs, six towels, one clothes bag, made of ticking, one tooth brush, one comb, one mattress, one pillow, two pillowcases, four sheets two blankets, one quilted bed-cover, one chair, one tumbler, one trunk, one account book and one basin. He is commanded by regulation immediately after reveille to hang up his extra clothing, to put such articles in the clothes bag as it is intended to contain, and to arrange his bedding and all his other effects in the



CHAPEL AT WEST POINT.

tion, and then comes evening parade, after which the battalion marches to supper. After supper they have thirty minutes, and are then called to quarters for study until 10 o'clock, when "taps" is sounded, and the signal for "lights out" finds the cadets tired and ready for sleep. On Wednesday and Saturday afternoons the cadets have no duties to perform, and unless they have been guilty of some slight infraction of the rules they may take a rest. But a

prescribed order. He may not, according to the regulation, keep in his room any of the implements used in chess, backgammon or any other game, and he must obtain a permit before any map, picture or piece of writing can be posted or attached in any way to the walls of his room.

When camp season comes again many of the plebs of the last camp season have disappeared; some departed before the camp closed, others could not stand the strain of work during the winter months, some failed to pass the January examinations, and, with the others who fell by the way-side, they went back to their homes, smaller, possibly, than they were when they received their appointment, and, although in many instances it may have taken argument to convince people of the fact, ill-health is usually given as the cause for a change in their object only a few months before.

For those who have remained in the institution a new era is about to begin. At the June exercises the plebs are allowed to make their debut. Their bearing has become manly and soldierly by that time, they have acquired so much of the soldier in the year past that they do not resemble the boys of that time, and parents and friends who come to the Academy hardly know them. They feel a pride in the fact that they have lived through their year of plebdom, and no one greets them more heartily as they enter the domain of the upper class men than the yearlings who are about to shake the dust of their condition from their boots and enter the more dignified sphere of second-class men. With the graduation hop the pleb's time of probation ceases. The



THE SEA GULLS.

peep into the courtyard of the barracks on these afternoons will convince the visitor that all cadets are not angels. While their companions are at ease, those who have transgressed must pace up and down a certain part of the yard accoutred and armed the same as a regular infantryman on sentry duty, and if the gray walls were transparent they would disclose to view also some who must suffer for their misconduct by being confined to their rooms. The strictest discipline, the severe course and the high standard required are the causes for depleting the ranks of the cadet corps, and it is estimated that about sixty per cent. of those who are fully accepted as cadets drop out before the four years' term is completed.

Those who remain and are graduated receive a cash capital of \$192 to start with. Out of the \$549 a year which is placed to the credit of every cadet \$1 is taken every month and kept for him, and at the end of his term at West Point he receives it in a lump sum. The purpose of the arrangement is to place the young officer out of need and to enable him to buy his officer's outfit. The \$549 a year which a cadet receives from the Government never reaches him in the shape of money. His account is simply credited with the amount, and against this charges are made for his clothing, books, board, laundry and all incidental expenses, and the great problem is how to keep out of debt. To buy anything with money of his own is an impossibility, because a cadet is kept penniless, and one of the regulations prescribes that no cadet shall apply for or receive money or any other supplies from his parents or from any person whomsoever without permission of the Superintendent.

The third and fourth years in the academy are equally severe; but the men who have outlived the hardships of the preceding terms are likely to survive and are finally graduated and their names sent to the War Department, with the recommendation of the Academic Board for commission in the army.

KISSING THE BIBLE.
Books Which Lips of Presidents Touched When Sworn In.

The Bible on which McKinley took the oath of office as President of the United States is an unusually handsome and costly copy of the Testaments made especially for the occasion in Ohio and presented to the new President by Bishop Arnett, of Wilberforce College, a colored institution in the Buckeye State, on behalf of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Its covers are of blue morocco with satin linings, white satin panels and gilt edges, with a gold plate in the center, and is engraved with the following inscription: William McKinley, President of the United States of America, inaugurated March 4, 1897.

The book on which he was sworn in to the highest office within the gift of the people was a matter of quite decided sentiment with President Cleveland. Mr. Cleveland asked the privilege of being sworn on a little

HOUSEHOLD MATTERS.
A LINDEN PILLOW-COVER.
A dainty square pillow has a cover of white, embroidered with small sprays of flowers carelessly scattered over it. These are worked with washable silks in soft, pale colors. The pillow is finished with a four-inch ruffle of the linen, the edge of which is worked in scallops.

TO CLEAN OILCLOTHS.
Cut into pieces half an ounce of beeswax, put in a saucer, cover entirely with turpentine, and place in the oven until melted. After washing the oilcloth thoroughly with a flannel, rub the whole surface lightly with a bit of flannel dipped in melted wax and turpentine. Then rub with a dry cloth. A polish is produced, and the surface is lightly coated with the wax. When the floor requires to be cleaned, the wax is washed off, together with the dust or dirt that may have gathered, while the oilcloth is preserved.

IN A SUNNY WINDOW.
The sweet pea may be used as a lovely and fragrant screen against the ugliness visible from many windows. Given a long, narrow box for this purpose, with a simple trellis work of ordinary wire or twine, well pulverized and enriched earth, with a small addition of sand and a moderate amount of sunshine—sweet pea vines being easily scorched, and if not actually dying, losing all their beauty in consequence—and a pretty window and a fragrant room and plenty of blossoms for cutting may be secured. A peculiarity of sweet peas is that the higher they are trained the more profusely they will bloom, and if all fading blossoms are removed before they can go to seed a constant succession of bloom is secured.

VERY Dainty NEW BEDSPREADS.
Daintiness and perishability seem to be the characteristics most sought after in the bedspreads that bear the mystic stamp "imported." The latest and perhaps the most frail is made of fine French swiss over pale-colored silk, pink, blue or yellow, finished with a deep frill about the edge, and with insertion or honiton lace in a delicate pattern above.

As is the case with all the best household furnishings, whether for the table or the bed, its beauty is made to depend rather upon exquisite fineness of material and perfection of finish than upon elaboration. Simplicity is considered essential to true elegance, but, alas, it is the simplicity that means greater outlay than do the more ornate designs. Silk beneath and cotton above is always indicative of the highest degree of elegance. It is only the wealthy who can afford to hide their fine wares, and these lovely spreads are no exception to the rule. Their lining must be of the best, and their simplicity is only a cloak for a more generous expenditure than would be required for many a more showy covering.—New York Journal.



BIBLE ON WHICH MCKINLEY TOOK THE OATH.

red Bible which had been given to him by his mother in his boyhood, when he first left the family roof-tree, and he took the oath at the beginning of both of his presidential terms on this book, which he treasures fondly. The custom, however, has been for the United States Supreme Court to furnish the Bible on which the President takes his official oath, and this tradition has been carried out by the clerk of the court ever since that tribunal was established, except on the two occasions when President Cleveland was installed in office. Mr. McKinley, Clerk of the Supreme Court, who has held the Bible on which Garfield was sworn and every President after him, has always marked the verse which the President touched with his lips, and after the inaugural has presented the book made historic by this event to the President or his wife.

The first inauguration of George Washington in the Federal building in New York on April 30, 1789, was delayed by the failure to procure a Bible. Just as the arrival of Washington was announced to Congress, Chancellor Livingston discovered that there was no Bible in the building. He was Master of St. John's Lodge No. 1 of Free Masons, and happened to remember that there was a Bible in the lodge room. A messenger was quickly sent to bring the book, and it is preserved to the present day among the relics of the lodge.

The Sea Gulls.
The big sea gulls, such as are seen about the harbor through the winter, come from farther north in the fall, and late in the spring they go north again, or far out to sea when the weather is cooler and the fish upon which the gulls feed are more abundant. There are many fishes that seek deeper, cooler waters in the summer, and the gulls follow them. There are smaller gulls, however, commonly called bluefish gulls, that remain outside the harbor all summer.—New York Sun.

CONGRESSIONAL.
Abstract of the Important Measures in Both Houses.

March 23.—Less than two score representatives were in their seats to-day at 10 o'clock when the house reassembled under the special order for the consideration of the tariff bill. Before proceeding with that, however, Mr. Wilson (Dem. N. C.), appeared at the bar and was sworn in by Speaker Reed.

The first speaker of the day was Mr. Gibson (Rep. Tenn.) in support of the bill. Mr. Dookery (Dem. Mo.) opposed the bill. Mr. Newlands, (Silvitee of Nevada), then took the floor as the spokesman of his party, which numbers three members in the house.

March 24.—The tariff debate in the house was almost as dull as the first. There were two notable speeches, one by Mr. Grosvenor of Ohio and the other by Mr. McMillin of Tennessee, but the rest of the speeches, with the possible exception of that of Mr. Walker of Massachusetts, hardly created a ripple on the monotonous sea of speech-making.

In the Senate the agricultural appropriation bill was reported just as it came from the House. Mr. Cullom, Republican, Illinois, introduced a bill for a monument to Abraham Lincoln on the Gettysburg battlefield. Mr. Allen, Republican, Nebraska, followed the bill, and the rest of the day was occupied by his attack of yesterday on civil service by the introduction of a bill to repeal the civil service act, all acts supplementary to it, and all executive orders issued thereon.

March 25.—The fourth and last day of the general debate on the tariff bill brought forth a request at the opening of the session by Mr. Bailey, Democrat, Texas, for an extension of two hours of the debate. He stated that he had been under treatment for sore throat and that it would be impossible for him to occupy the floor for an hour to-day. Mr. Payne, Republican, New York, objected to the request.

Mr. Talbert, Democrat, South Carolina, opened the discussion in a 15-minute speech against the bill.

Mr. Champ Clark (Dem. Mo.), made one of his characteristic speeches against the bill. Mr. Simpson spoke against the bill.

March 26.—The real consideration of the tariff bill began this morning, when the bill was thrown open for amendment under the five-minute rule. The leaders on both sides were in their places, but there were hardly more than 50 members on the floor. Mr. Lanham, as soon as the enacting clause of the bill was read, moved to strike it out. Mr. Sherman, who was in the chair, ruled that the motion was out of order.

Mr. Dookery offered the first amendment. It was to the enacting clause and was in the nature of a proviso that whenever it was shown to the satisfaction of the President that there was a trust or combination to control the price of an article on the dutiable list, the duty on such article should be suspended.

Mr. Dingley made the point of order that the amendment in effect was to the free list and as the house was now considering the dutiable list it was not in order.

The chair ruled that the Dookery amendment to the tariff was out of order. Mr. Dookery appealed from the decision of the chair. The ruling of the chair was sustained, 158 to 104.

In the Senate Senator Quay introduced a batch of fifty or more bills. They were bills that he had introduced at the last Congress, but which had failed to become laws, and he now starts them again on another trip through the legislative routine. Among the bills were those for public buildings at McKeesport, Washington, Altoona and Wilkesbarre.

CYCLING NOTES.
The French Touring Club has 50,000 members. A bill for the taxation of bicycles has been defeated in the Vermont Legislature. Soap and water are fine things for soiled cork strips, and although the remedy is very simple, thousands of riders have yet to discover it.

It is estimated that a bicyclist can travel over fifteen miles of good road on his wheel with less exertion than he can walk four miles on foot.

Riding after dark for pleasure is forbidden in Japan. An English writer objects to such restrictions, but forgets that a cycle cannot be ridden after 12 m. in London's parks.

Bicycling seems to have a beneficial effect on a British air. A critic of a recent exhibition states that "rowing, perhaps, or not to rowing, the amateur works are less numerous than used this year, and smaller in size."

The transverse arrangement of a series of metallic strips between the interior of the air chamber and the thread of the tire, in connection with a side air pump, is the subject of a recent patent in non-pneumatic bicycle tires.

Here is a hint which will prove most useful to novices when replacing the chain of their bicycles. Bring both ends together on the top of front chain wheel, and it can easily be held in this position while the rivet is being secured. See that the little nut is carefully screwed home.

To show what a bicycle can be put to and what a cyclist can accomplish, it is stated that a young Australian recently rode from Coosygardie, in Australia, across the big deserts to Soudan, most of the route consisting of waterless stretches of hundreds of miles in length.

A machine has been invented for measuring cyclists for bicycles. All particulars as to reach of arms and leg, size of foot, etc., are most carefully noted, and there is consequently no necessity for one upon receiving the machine being bothered to adjust it, and repeat the experiment until comfort is obtained, that being at once assured.

A convertible tandem is one of the novelties of the year. A novelty coupling and hinge make it possible to change a double diamond into a drop-frame front and diamond rear, or the diamond front and drop rear, or a double drop frame. By removing the central portion it can be made into a single bicycle, and this can be made either diamond or drop, at will.

A point of advantage to cyclists is found in a new pump connection which is said to fit all pumps, the manufacturers having adopted the standard thread. The gain in this direction is that if one is out without a pump, and the tire becomes deflated, an ordinary pump may be used. It is very rarely, indeed, that a wheelman gets any distance without meeting some one who has a kit.

The Tobacco Habit.
In 1891 the official physician of Yale university reported that in a class of 147 students he had found that in four years the 77 who did not use tobacco surpassed the 70 who did use it to the extent of 10.4 per cent. in increase of height and 26.7 per cent. in increase of chest girth. In the same period at Amherst college it was found that the abstainers from tobacco gained 24 per cent in weight, 37 per cent in height and 42 per cent in chest girth. But the most striking revelation from the statistics was that respecting lung capacity. The Amherst abstainers having gained 75 per cent over the tobacco users, while at Yale the average gain was 77.5 per cent.

Japan is a literary country, with a history of writing and literature since at least A. D. 712. Last year the number of books published was 25,963, of which 20,000 were translations or compilations. Law had 4,830, religion followed with 4,182, printing and sculpture had 3,000, music 1,022, letters, novels, stories, criticisms, etc., 1,112 titles.

In the course of an interview granted by Li Hung Chang to an English journalist on his return to China, it appeared that the viceroy does not personally object to missionaries, and admits that the missionaries have been a material service, but he resents their endeavors to educate Chinese women.